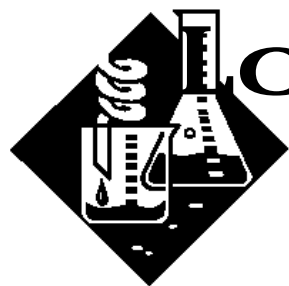

USDA-ARS



Logan Location Safety Notes



November 2001

ARE YOU READY FOR WINTER?

Take this quiz to test your cold-weather know-how. Knowing what to do can save lives (answers appear below.)

1. True or False: When cold-weather activities require physical exertion, layering is the best approach.
2. In cold, wet, windy weather, a good choice for outer clothing would be: A) goose-down insulation; B) wool; C) a synthetic fleece.
3. True or False: Hypothermia results from frostbite.
4. True or False: Hot coffee laced with brandy is a quick cure when chills set in.
5. Frostbite is most similar to: A) a bruise; B) a burn; C) a scrape.
6. In extremely cold weather, in addition to a coat, one of the most important items is a warm: A) pair of gloves; B) pair of boots; C) hat.
7. True or False: First-aid for frostbite includes vigorously rubbing the affected area.
8. True or False: If you're caught out in frigid weather, a snow cave can save your life.

9. It's below freezing and your feet got wet crossing a stream. You should: A) head for camp; B) build a fire and get dry; C) walk briskly until your feet dry.

10. True or False: Dehydration is a common physical problem in cold weather.

Here are the answers to the quiz:

1. True. Trapped perspiration and overheating while walking or climbing is the enemy, and the way to defeat it is to wear multiple layers, removing outer clothing while exercising and putting them back on while stationary.
2. B. Wool. Goose down loses its loft and warmth when wet, and most synthetic fleeces offer poor wind resistance. Down can be covered with waterproof material, of course, and fleece can be backed with a windproof liner-but natural wool retains warmth when wet and, if close-woven, it offers good wind resistance.
3. False. Hypothermia is a subnormal body core temperature - and weather need not be freezing for it to occur. Without adequate clothing, or when combined with dampness and wind chill, hypothermia is very possible with temperatures in the range of 50 degrees.
4. Absolutely false. Any warmth offered by

alcohol is a false warmth. Alcohol and caffeine (and, for that matter, nicotine) adversely affect circulation, so they are poor choices for treating chills or cold injuries.

5. B. Burn. Frostbite and burns are very similar, including the degrees to which they occur. Treatment is also similar, except that gradual-never sudden-warming is essential for the frostbite-affected area.

6. C. Hat. A tremendous amount of heat loss takes place from the head and neck. A well-insulated hat goes a long way toward keeping the whole body warm. A smart trick is a muffler or even a bandanna tied around the neck.

7. False. Frostbite is freezing of the affected area. While rubbing may bring back circulation to chilled hands, feet, or face before frostbite actually sets in, it will only cause more tissue damage if actual frostbite has occurred.

8. True. Packed snow is a superb insulator, and getting out of the wind is the first key to survival. Ordinary wax candles should be a part of any cold-weather emergency kit, and a single candle provides amazing warmth in a snug snow cave. Caution: Make absolutely certain you keep a well-packed breathing hole open.

9. B. Build a fire and get dry as quickly as possible. Wet feet in freezing weather are an invitation to frostbite.

10. True. In cold weather, people tend not to feel thirsty, and dehydration can be a severe problem-just as severe as in extreme heat, and just as dangerous. Concentrate on drinking plenty of fluids whether you feel thirsty or not. Eating snow is only a partial answer, for it takes surprising quantities of snow to offer significant amounts of water.

IH BASELINE SURVEYS

The purpose of Industrial Hygiene (IH) is to protect the health and well-being of working people and the public from chemical, microbiological and physical health hazards present at, or emanating from, the workplace. The ARS safety community has been working on developing a baseline survey to be done at every location by November 2002. We've finally developed a form for recording the information that will be gathered and are now ready to start.

The IH baseline survey is somewhat similar to the facility safety surveys our location safety team conducts each year. The survey looks at each work area, lists the primary hazards present, what the working amounts and procedures are, and who is in the area. It also records what engineering, administrative, or protective equipment is being used to reduce any hazard to the workers. From this information, we can then decide if monitoring (primarily for airborne contaminants) is necessary.

Terrie has assisted the national committee in developing a computer version of the form and testing it out using a handheld device. The location safety team will be working on this over the next several months. So when you see us huddled around what looks like a Gameboy® be assured that we are working to help keep your workplace safe!

BIOTERRORISM/ ANTHRAX THREATS

A great deal of media attention is focusing on bioterrorism and especially the anthrax cases. Procedures for handling suspicious mail have been sent to all employees. The symptoms of anthrax have been published and are available from local health centers. The risk of you being infected is still very low, however. To bring things into perspective, as of November 1, 4 people had died from anthrax; 113 people were killed in vehicle accidents on that day alone. Know the facts! If you want more information, contact Terrie at 752-2941.

Questions? Comments? Contact Terrie Wierenga via email
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